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Annual Report
January to December 1989

Occupational Health and Safety Council

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Alberta
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

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Alberta

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
AND THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

420 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/422-9613 Fax 403/422-5996

October, 1991

Honourable Dr. David J. Carter
Speaker
Legislative Assembly of Alberta
325 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta

Sir:

I have the honour to present the Annual Report of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Council for the calendar year 1989.

Respectfully submitted,

PETER TRYNCHY
Minister

Alberta
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND
SAFETY COUNCIL

Donsdale Place, 10709 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 3N3 403/427-6971 Facsimile 403/427-5698

October, 1991

Honourable Peter Trynchy
Minister Responsible for
Occupational Health and Safety
420 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta

Dear Mr. Trynchy:

In accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Council is pleased to present its Annual Report for the calendar year of 1989.

Respectfully submitted,

T E Whiting

Tom Whiting
Chairman

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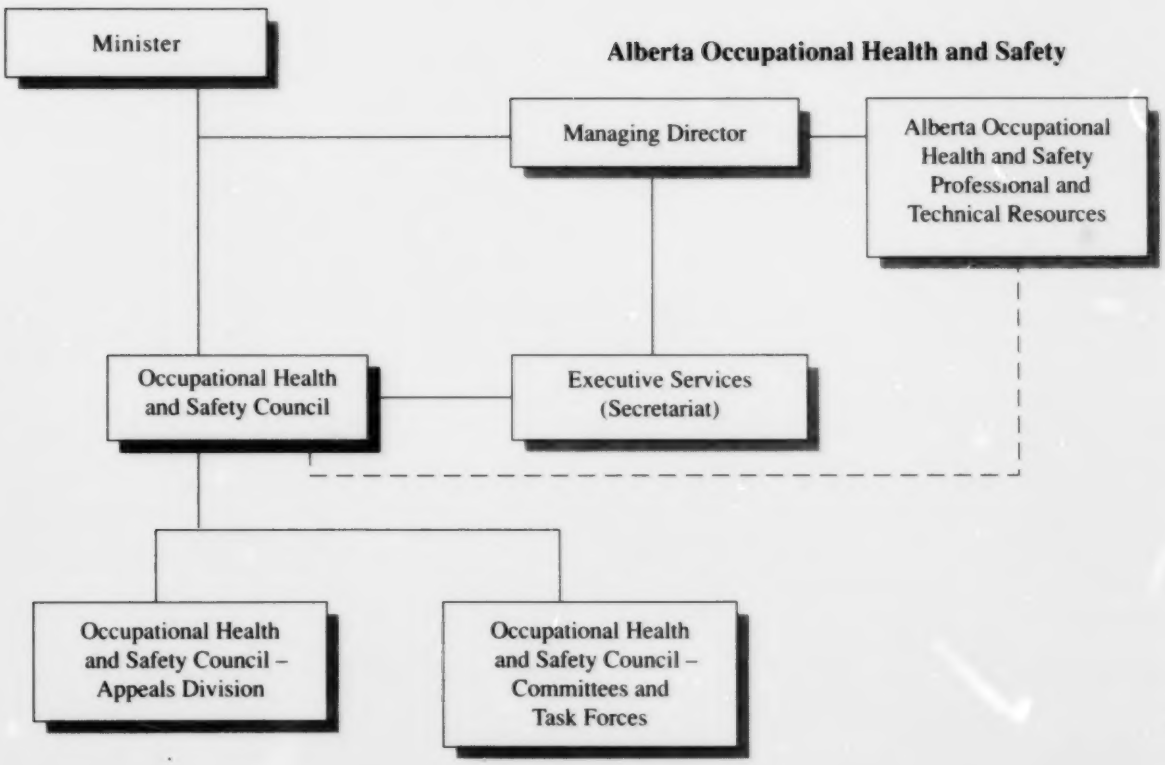
Over the years, the council's most significant role has been to provide a forum for employers, employees and the general public to debate the critical issue of worker health and safety.

Council organization


Minister
Alberta Occupational Health and Safety
Managing Director
Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Professional and Technical Resources
Occupational Health and Safety Council
Executive Services (Secretariat)
Occupational Health and Safety Council – Appeals Division
Occupational Health and Safety Council – Committees and Task Forces

Council members

Tom Whiting
CHAIRMAN
Innisfail
Public

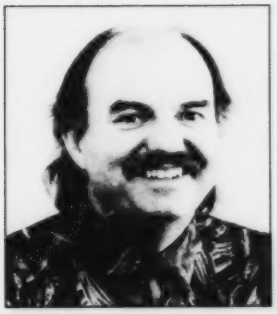
Larry Cook
MEMBER
Beaverlodge
Employer

Sam Lee
VICE CHAIRMAN
Edmonton
Labour

John Cowell
MEMBER
Calgary
Employer

Gus Bottas
MEMBER
Edmonton
Labour

Clayton Delbridge
MEMBER
Edmonton
Employer



Clint Dunford
MEMBER
Lethbridge
Employer

Susan Ruffo
MEMBER
Edmonton
Labour

Cheryl Hall
MEMBER
Calgary
Public

Harold Taylor
MEMBER
Calgary
Labour

Ken McBeth
MEMBER
Edmonton
Public

Cliff Turner
MEMBER
Grande Prairie
Employer

About the council

History and Mandate

The Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Council was established by Order-in-Council in November 1976. It has twelve members who represent employers, labour and the general public.

The council's task is to advise the Minister responsible on matters related to the health and safety of workers in Alberta, and to perform any related duties and functions that may be assigned by the Minister. The council is empowered to hear appeals of orders issued by Alberta Occupational Health and Safety.

Minister Responsible

Until April 1989 council reported to the Honourable Dr. Ian Reid, Minister of Alberta Environment and Minister responsible for Alberta Occupational Health and Safety and the Workers' Compensation Board.

After the March 1989 provincial general election, the Honourable Peter Trynchy was appointed Minister responsible for Alberta Occupational Health and Safety and the Workers' Compensation Board.

Relationship with Alberta Occupational Health and Safety

Council is autonomous from the public service. However, it enjoys a close working relationship with Alberta Occupational Health and Safety.

In 1989 Alberta Occupational Health and Safety implemented some organizational changes to improve its responsiveness to employer and worker needs. Council was kept apprised of these activities and offered advice throughout the process. One element of the restructuring was the recruitment of a new chief executive officer to head the free standing agency. Council welcomes Dr. Hugh Walker who joined the organization in May 1989 as Managing Director.

Council extends its appreciation for the support and assistance it received from the former Managing Director, Dr. Herb Buchwald, who resigned to take a position with the Ontario Hospital Association, Occupational Health and Safety Division.

Council's administrative support is provided by the Executive Services of Alberta Occupational Health and Safety under the direction of Ms. Phyllis Kohut.

Council Committees

The following committees of council were active in 1989:

Small Business
Clint Dunford - Chairman
Gus Bottas
Ken McBeth

Legislation
Clint Dunford - Chairman
Ken McBeth
Harold Taylor

Health and Safety Programs
Cliff Turner - Chairman
Sam Lee
Larry Cook

Research
(the members of the Research Committee sit on the Occupational Health and Safety Heritage Grant Program Steering Committee)
Sam Lee - Chairman
Clayton Delbridge
Ken McBeth
Cliff Turner

Safety and Training in the Oil and Gas Drilling and Servicing Industries
John Cowell - Chairman
Tom Whiting
Maureen Shaw

The year in review

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Promoting Workplace Health and Safety

Council members travel across the province making presentations and meeting with a variety of provincial and local safety associations. These contacts are used to promote occupational health and safety practices, procedures and programs. They also keep council up-to-date on emerging occupational health and safety issues.

In 1989 council's profile under the chairmanship of Maureen Shaw resulted in many new opportunities for council to communicate its occupational health and safety message. Council's chairman accepted invitations to speak at conferences, meetings and workshops. To name just a few of these activities, Maureen Shaw chaired sessions at the University of Alberta Hospitals Conference on Injury Awareness and Prevention and addressed a session of the 1989 Annual Convention of the Alberta Hospital Association. She also participated as a guest lecturer to University of Alberta engineering and business students. Council recognized this as an opportunity to educate future managers on the importance of integrating occupational health and safety into business practices.

Inter-provincial Relations

Council members made presentations and met with occupational health and safety groups across Canada to promote an inter-provincial focus. The meetings revealed a shared desire to increase opportunities for information and resource sharing.

From January to November 1989 Maureen Shaw, on behalf of council, served as a Director of the Industrial Accident Prevention Association of Ontario (IAPA). This position resulted in a network of contacts for council that will facilitate future inter-provincial collaborations.

Conferences, Guest Speakers, Industrial Worksite Visits

Every year council takes part in activities which help members keep up-to-date on occupational health and safety issues and initiatives.

In 1989 council was represented at a variety of conferences and workshops. In addition, a number of organizations attended council meetings to discuss health and safety activities and initiatives. Council also selected worksites across the province to view innovative safety programs in action.

A few of the conferences and workshops council was represented at included:

- A Workshop on Occupational Health and Safety Statistics, The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (Edmonton);
- The Canadian Occupational Professional Engineers Conference (Toronto);
- The Petroleum Industry Annual Safety Seminar, The Canadian Petroleum Association (Banff);
- The Canadian Society of Safety Engineering - Alberta Branch (Banff).

In 1989 guests at council meetings included representatives from the following organizations:

- Alberta Petrochemical Safety Council - General Entry Level Safety (GELS) Training Program Committee;
- HEROES Program - University of Alberta Hospitals (Dr. L.H. Francescutti);
- Southern Alberta Institute of Technology Open Learning Instructional System (SOLIS);
- Workers' Compensation Board;
- Alberta Construction Safety Association.

The year in review

Networking

Council often acts as a catalyst by promoting dialogue, offering input, providing direction and making referrals to industry associations, institutions and other related organizations. Council views this as a vital role and devotes time to developing a network of key contacts.

Planning

In August of 1989 council held a planning retreat. A plan titled "Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Council – Future Directions of Council (1990-1993)" was developed. The plan was reviewed with the Minister and senior officials of Alberta Occupational Health and Safety in order to coordinate and integrate priorities and objectives.

Appeals

Sections 11 and 12 of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act empower council to hear appeals of orders issued by officials of Alberta Occupational Health and Safety. These appeals can involve orders that have been issued under the Act, licenses, permits or certificates that have been cancelled, and matters of worker dismissal or discipline. Council, on considering the appeal may confirm, revoke, or vary the orders. Rules of procedure have been developed for all parties to the appeal.

In 1989 one appeal was heard by council. Prudential Steel Limited appealed an order to provide proper access and egress to a worksite. Council considered the arguments on both sides of the issue and decided that the order was properly issued. The appeal was denied.

Awards

The chairman and other members of council assist the Minister and staff of Alberta Occupational Health and Safety in presenting "Gold Hard Hat" and "Wise Owl" awards. Presentations are made to workers showing personal responsibility by wearing protective equipment that may have saved them from serious injury or death. The awards continue to be a successful method of positively reinforcing safety policies and procedures.

Council Membership

Phillip Oakes, representing workers, completed his term of appointment in March 1989. He served council and several of its committees for 5 years. His contributions to worker health and safety in Alberta were significant and appreciated. Larry Cook was appointed to council in June 1989 and represents employers. Susan Ruffo, representing labour, was appointed in December 1989.

Council chairman Maureen Shaw resigned in the fall of 1989 to accept an appointment by Labour Canada to chair the Council of Governors of the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, headquartered in Hamilton, Ontario. Tom Whiting was appointed council chairman in November 1989. Sam Lee was named vice-chairman.

Maureen Shaw was first appointed to council in December, 1984. During 1985 she served as chairman of the appeals division of council and was appointed council chairman in December, 1986. Under Maureen's chairmanship, council evolved into a proactive forum with influence beyond Alberta's borders. Council became active in promoting health and safety awareness to the grass roots level and expanded the focus of health and safety beyond the workplace, to include the home and the community.

Maureen Shaw is a committed, energetic ambassador and promoter of worker health and safety who has made a significant contribution to occupational health and safety provincially and nationally. Her appointment to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety is an indication of her leadership abilities. Her commitment and active involvement in occupational health and safety has been recognized by a number of health and safety related organizations. Maureen was the inaugural recipient of the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE) - Canadian Medal of Merit. The medal was awarded at a special presentation dinner sponsored by CSSE which included tributes from the Minister, senior government and business officials. The federal Minister of Labour was represented by his Parliamentary Secretary, Mr Ken James, Member of Parliament for Sarnia-Lambden, Ontario.

Maureen Shaw's contributions in raising and communicating the critical issue of occupational health and safety is gratefully acknowledged by the Minister, the staff of Alberta Occupational Health and Safety, and her council colleagues.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

At the request of the Minister and on its own initiative, council examines a number of current issues in workplace health and safety. Committees are established to deal with important emerging issues of concern to labour, business and government. Committee activities and reports are ratified at regular monthly meetings of council for conveyance to the Minister and Alberta Occupational Health and Safety.

Small Business

The small business committee is preparing a report to be presented to the Minister early in 1990. The report will outline strategies to reduce the number of lost-time accidents occurring in businesses with fewer than 40 employees. In liaison with Alberta Occupational Health and Safety, the committee is reviewing different approaches to enhancing health and safety practices in small businesses by examining the problem in Canada and abroad. This has involved considerable desk research and an extensive review of current and historical literature on the subject.

Legislation

The function of this committee is to review proposed amendments to the provincial occupational health and safety legislation. During 1989, it offered advice on proposed changes to the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations.

Health and Safety Programs

In 1989 Alberta Occupational Health and Safety established the Health and Safety Programs Division responsible for encouraging the creation of health and safety programs at Alberta worksites.

The committee reviewed draft concept papers on the development and implementation of health and safety programs and provided comments to Alberta Occupational Health and Safety. Staff attended council meetings to provide progress reports on activities and other initiatives.

Heritage Grant Programs

This committee is made up of council members who participate on the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Grant Program Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee receives submissions, reviews applications and makes recommendations to the Minister with respect to funding proposed projects. Council members may provide the Minister with advice and recommendations on the role and activities of the steering committee.

Safety and Training in the Oil and Gas Drilling and Servicing Industries

During 1989 the committee monitored activities towards implementation of recommendations from the Upstream Petroleum Industry Task Force on Safety Report.

Council endorsed the report recommendations and strongly supported those recommendations relating to the training and certification of oil industry workers and advised the Minister accordingly.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Workers' Compensation Board

Council continued to offer input concerning joint initiatives and areas of cooperation between the Workers' Compensation Board and Alberta Occupational Health and Safety. In May 1989 council was invited to a meeting between the two agencies on this subject. On behalf of council, Maureen Shaw presented a paper on working together to reduce injuries and promote health at the workplace.

Roundtable

A key objective established by council for 1989 is to strengthen partnerships and to encourage the cooperative action of workers, employers, government, and the general public in promoting workplace health and safety.

Accordingly, council planned, organized and chaired the First Annual Roundtable on Occupational Health and Safety in Alberta, held at the Banff Management Centre in March 1989. The invitational Roundtable brought together representatives from the public and private sector involved in and knowledgeable about workplace health and safety issues. Private sector industry participants included the oil and gas, forestry, utilities, and manufacturing industries, as well as small business owners. The three day Roundtable was attended by 90 senior labour, business and government leaders whose objective was to discuss current initiatives, gain consensus on key issues and to develop an integrated action plan for follow-up activities.

The Roundtable was funded through a grant from the Occupational Health and Safety Heritage Grant Program as well as generous private industry sponsorship.

The Roundtable was evaluated as an overwhelming success. A consensus was achieved on approaches to occupational health and safety and on the need for alliances and partnerships in developing new policy directions and implementing programs.

Conference Society of Alberta

The critical issue of occupational health and safety was chosen as the subject for the October 1989 conference of the Conference Society of Alberta, held in Jasper. The 1989 conference was titled "Occupational Health and Safety - What's Working." Council chairman Maureen Shaw was a member of the conference planning committee and several council members attended and participated in conference workshops and plenary sessions.

Public Awareness of Occupational Health and Safety

At the close of the Jasper Conference, council joined the initiative taken by a number of participants, including Alberta Occupational Health and Safety staff and representatives from labour and business, to develop a follow-up plan. This activity would build on the spirit of cooperation and the momentum gained at both the Banff Roundtable and the Jasper Conference.

Council organized a dinner meeting in November 1989 to inform the Minister on the desire of participants at the recent conference to raise awareness and commitment to occupational health and safety. Guests included staff from Alberta Occupational Health and Safety, representatives from business, labour and members of council. Tom Whiting chaired the discussion.

Honourable Peter Trynchy requested that a task group be established. It was to develop a strategic plan advocating and promoting priorities for action by government, business, labour and the general public.

Forum For Action

The assembled task group, named "The Forum for Action", has a multi-sectoral membership from employers, workers and government and is an independent body of the constituencies it represents. Tom Whiting, council's representative on the Forum, will continue to work with the group as it carries forward its activities into 1990.

Alberta Chamber of Resources

Council endorsed the main recommendations contained in the Alberta Chamber of Resources Task Force Report on Accident Prevention. Maureen Shaw continued as a member of the task force in gathering public response on the report's recommendations. A key recommendation of the task force was for the establishment of a province-wide safety association.

Training Initiatives

Council was consulted in the development of two innovative industry based training programs - the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology-Open Learning Instructional System (SOLIS) and the initiatives developed by the Northern Alberta Petro Chemical Safety Council - General Entry Level Safety Training Program (GELS). The proposed GELS program, by certifying and tracking trained workers, will provide for consistency in safety training and eliminate duplication as workers move from site to site. Council provided input on the training modules and facilitated consultation with Alberta Occupational Health and Safety in developing training program components.

Council attended the launch of the SOLIS program and was awarded a certificate by the GELS program in recognition of its contribution to program development and its ongoing support for worker training.

The Alberta Awareness and Injury Prevention Program - HEROES (University of Alberta Hospitals)

Injuries are the leading cause of death for young Albertans. "HEROES: An Injury Prevention Program for Alberta Teenagers" was developed by the Injury Awareness and Prevention Centre at the University of Alberta Hospitals, under the direction of Dr. Louis Francescutti. HEROES is a multi-media presentation targeted at Alberta high school students. Two main objectives of the presentation are to raise the awareness of teenagers that they are at risk of sustaining injuries and to change their behaviour to reduce risk of sustaining an injury. The program provides a clear message enabling students to make knowledgeable decisions and accept the responsibilities and consequences of their decisions. The program emphasizes several simple, effective choices to reduce chance of injury: Buckle Up, Drive Sober, Look First, Wear the Gear, and Get Trained.

Council strongly endorses the program and during its development provided input to Dr. Francescutti on incorporating healthy and safe work practices into the HEROES message. Council made recommendations to the Minister and Alberta Occupational Health and Safety on the merits of this unique and innovative prevention program. As well, council endorsed Occupational Health and Safety Heritage Grant funding which was instrumental in launching the program throughout Alberta's high schools.

Literacy in the Workplace

Literacy of workers especially in relation to implementation of the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) was promoted by council. Council recommended the formation of an interdepartmental task force to examine literacy and to ensure that all occupational health and safety materials and programs be reviewed and written at a level appropriate to the worker handling the materials. Council supported the Alberta Vocational College English as a Second Language Program in the development of a video to assist workers in identifying hazards through pictures, symbols and labels without narration. A recommendation was made to the Minister to provide funding toward this project from the Occupational Health and Safety Heritage Grant Program.

Maureen Shaw represented council on a planning committee established by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. The committee was mandated to develop a national workshop on literacy in the workplace. The workshop titled "Literacy: The Right to Know" was delivered in April 1989. Maureen Shaw was invited to be a workshop speaker.

Conclusion

Acknowledgements

Council appreciates the support and leadership of Honourable Dr. Ian Reid and Honourable Peter Trynchy. The cooperation of the managing director and staff of Alberta Occupational Health and Safety is also gratefully acknowledged.

The Year Ahead

In the year ahead, council will continue to advise the Minister, at his request and on its own initiatives, on current and emerging workplace health and safety issues.

In 1990 council will continue to build on the momentum generated in the past year particularly in the areas of partnerships and active promotion of worker health and safety practices and programs throughout all Alberta workplaces. Special emphasis will be placed on promoting occupational health and safety initiatives in the small business sector.